

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 /059 W  
-----010561 292341Z /63

P 292030Z JUL 77  
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1066  
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL  
ALL OTHER CANADIAN POSTS (BY POUCH)

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 QUEBEC 0290

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJ: UPDATE ON QUEBEC'S LANGUAGE LEGISLATION

1. SUMMARY: WITH BILL 101 NOW MIREN IN TORTUOUS CLAUSE BY  
CLAUSE DEBATE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND AMID SIGNS THAT GOQ MAY  
BE SOFTENING ITS HERETOFORE RIGID STANCE, CONGEN FEELS FOLLOWING  
RUNDOWN OF SAGA OF BILLS ONE/101 SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF  
THE PQ'S LANDMARK LANGUAGE LEGISLATION MIGHT BE USEFUL TO  
ADDRESSEES. END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTER OF STATE FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CAMILLE LAURIN  
INTRODUCED PQ'S NEW LANGUAGE LAW, BILL ONE, ON APRIL 27,  
ALMOST ONE MONTH AFTER PUBLICATION OF PQ'S WHITE PAPER ON THE  
SUBJECT. WHITE PAPER HAD CREATED AN IMMEDIATE UPROAR, PARTICULARLY  
AMONG ANGLOPHONE CUMMUNITY MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED,  
AND BILL ONE DID NOTHING TO SOOTHE TEMPERS. TO THE CONSTERNATION  
OF ANGLOPHONES AND SOME FRANCOPHONE GROUPS, BILL ONE DIFFERED  
ONLY marginally FROM WHITE PAPER (FOR FULL REPORTING OF  
PROVISIONS OF BOTH WHITE PAPER AND BILL ONE, SEE QUEBEC 0143  
AND 0174).

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EM THERE WERE IMMEDIATE INDICATIONS THAT PQ LEADERSHIP ITSELF  
WAS SPLIT OVER THE BILL, IN SPITE OF LAURIN'S IMPASSIONED AND  
UNEQUIVOCAL INSISTENCE THAT THE DRACONIAN LEGISLATION WAS  
ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO CORRECT PAST LINGUISTIC DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST FRANCOPHONES AND TO HALT EROSION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE  
AND CULTURE IN QUEBEC. LEVESQUE, ON THE OTHER HAND, PRONOUNCED

HIMSELF "UNEASY" OVER THE BILL, AND WORRIED PUBLICLY THAT SEVERAL OF ITS PROVISIONS WERE TOO HARSH, PARTICULARLY THOSE RESTRICTING ENTRY TO ANGLOPHONE SCHOOLS. THROUGHOUT THE FIRST MONTHS OF DEBATE, LEVESQUE AND OTHER LANGUAGE MODERATES WITHIN THE PQ SUPPORTED LAURIN AND THE HARDLINERS IN PUBLIC, BUT CONTINUED TO EXPRESS MISGIVINGS WITHIN CABINET WHICH INEVITABLY FOUND THEIR WAY INTO THE PRESS.

4. BILL ONE PASSED FIRST READING RAPIDLY, ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION TOOK STEP, UNUSUAL AT FIRST READINGS, OF VOTING AGAINST IT. LAURIN FORMED A PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF ALL PARTIES, AND BEGAN HEARING THE FIRST OF OVER 250 BRIEFS PRESENTED BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WISHING TO TESTIFY ON THE LEGISLATION.

5. OPPOSITION, COMING CHIEFLY FROM ANGLOPHONES AND IMMIGRANT GROUPS IN MONTREAL AREA BUT ALSO FROM FRANCOPHONE GROUPS WORRIED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WOULD LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ENGLISH, WAS ORIGINALLY DISORGANIZED AND INEFFECTIVE, BUT SOLIDIFIED AS COMMISSION HEARINGS GROUND INTO JUNE. PARTICULARLY GOOD PRESENTATIONS WERE MADE BY ANGLOPHONE POSITIVE ACTION COMMITTEE AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AS WELL AS OTHER INFLUENTIAL BUSINESSMEN'S GROUPS. LAURIN PRESIDED OVER SEEMINGLY ENDLESS COMMISSION SESSIONS WITH ICY POLITENESS AND BIBLICAL PATIENCE, HEARING EACH GROUP OUT BUT STEADFASTLY REFUSING TO CONSIDER ANY BUT THE MOST MINOR CHANGES TO HIS BILL. SIGNIFI-  
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CANTLY, HE GAVE THE BACK OF HIS HAND TO A GROUP OF 326 PROMINENT FRANCOPHONE QUEBECOIS WHO HAD WRITTEN TO HIM OPPOSING SOME PROVISIONS OF THE BILL, ACCUSING THEM OF HAVING SOLD OUT TO THE ANGLOPHONES (MONTREAL 0906). THAT EARNED HIM A GLEEFUL DRUBBING IN THE PRESS BUT SOLIDIFIED HIS REPUTATION AS AN UNCOMPROMISING ZEALOT WITH FRANCOPHONE CULTURAL NATIONALISTS.

6. MID-JUNE BROUGHT THE FIRST HINTS OF CHANGE. THE HEARINGS DRONED ON, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ORIGINAL HOPE OF PASSING THE LEGISLATION BY JUNE 24, QUEBEC'S NATIONAL FESTIVAL, WAS A PIPEDREAM. IF ALL THE BRIEFS WERE TO BE HEARD, THE HEARINGS THEMSELVES WOULD STRETCH THROUGH AUGUST AND THE BILL WOULD BARELY REACH SECOND READING BY THE TIME SCHOOL OPENED IN SEPTEMBER. WITH AN EYE TOWARD ENDING THE HEARINGS EARLY, LAURIN BEGAN TO SPEAK OF "MORE FLEXIBILITY." LEVESQUE WENT FURTHER, HINTING ABOUT DROPPING THE CONTROVERSIAL CLAUSE BARRING CANADIANS FROM OUTSIDE QUEBEC FROM ATTENDING ANGLOPHONE SCHOOLS HERE (THE "QUEBEC OPTION"). LAURIN HIMSELF PROMISED TO DROP A UNIVERSALLY-CONDEMNED CLAUSE STIPULATING THAT BILL ONE HAD LEGAL PRECEDENCE OVER QUEBEC'S HUMAN RIGHTS LAW. LEVESQUE ANNOUNCED THAT BILL ONE WOULD NOT APPLY TO QUEBEC'S

INDIANS AND INNUITS. RUMORS CIRCULATED THAT "MAJOR CHANGES,"  
OR EVEN "A COMPLETE REVISION" OF THE BILL, WERE IN THE WORKS.

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7. BY MID-JULY, THE PQ HAD DECIDED THAT THE COMMISSION  
HEARINGS HAD GONE ON LONG ENOUGH, THAT BRIEFS WERE BECOMING  
REPETITIVE AND LITTLE NEW INFORMATION WAS BEING PROVIDED,  
ALTHOUGH ONLY SOME 60 OF THE 250-PLUS BRIEFS HAD BEEN HEARD.  
THE GOVERNMENT WAS BEING INCREASINGLY ROASTED EDITORIALY  
FOR ALLOWING ITS OBSESSION WITH LANGUAGE TO BLOCK OTHER  
URGENTLY-NEEDED LEGISLATION. IN ADDITION, THE TALK OF A SERIOUS  
CABINET SPLIT GREW. LAURIN, IT WAS RUMORED, HAD THREATENED  
TO RESIGN AND SPLIT THE PQ WIDE OPEN IF HIS LEGISLATION WAS  
SOFTENED. LEVESQUE WAS SEEN TO HAVE LOST CONTROL OF HIS CABINET.  
ON JULY 12, IN A BOLD PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVER AIMED AT ENDING  
THE HEARINGS AND SHORT-CIRCUITING A PLANNED FILIBUSTER BY THE  
OPPOSITION (WHOSE OBJECTIVE WAS AND IS TO DELAY PASSAGE OF  
THE BILL UNTIL AFTER THE OPENING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR), GOVERN-  
MENT WITHDREW BILL ONE, INTRODUCED A NEW VERSION KNOWN AS  
BILL 101, AND WENT DIRECTLY TO SECOND READING ON THE NEW BILL.

8. BILL ONE OPPONENTS WERE STUNNED TO DISCOVER THAT, DESPITE  
ALL THE TALK OF A MAJOR OVERHAUL, BILL 101 DIFFERED VERY LITTLE  
IN SUBSTANCE FROM ITS PREDECESSOR. WHILE SEVERAL CONCESSIONS  
WERE MADE IN THE ECONOMIC AREA (EASING OF PENALTIES FOR FAILURE  
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TO FRANCISIZE, EASING OF RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF ENGLISH BY MULTILATERAL CORPORATIONS AND SMALL BUSINESSES), THE HARSH PROVISIONS REGARDING ENTRY INTO ENGLISH SCHOOLS WERE RETAINED. BILL 101 REPRESENTED AN OBVIOUS VICTORY FOR LAURIN AND THE HARDLINERS.

9. PQ'S PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVER BACKFIRED BADLY WHEN OPPOSITION, RAISING CRY OF STEAMROLLER TACTICS AND AUTHORITARIANISM ON PART OF GOVERNMENT, ADROITLY INTRODUCED CENSURE MOTION AGAINST LAURIN AND PQ PARLIAMENTARY LEADER BURNS, THEREBY STALLING BILL 101 PROCEEDINGS. GOQ WAS LEFT IN EMBARRASSING POSITION OF HAVING TWO BILLS ON SAME SUBJECT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY, WITH A PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION STILL LEGALLY IN EXISTENCE BUT NO LONGER SITTING AND UNABLE TO DELIVER ITS REPORT. PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION, HERETOFORE SCATTERSHOT AND UNINSPIRED, WAS NOW GALVANIZED AND SCENTING BLOOD.

10. SITUATION AT PRESENT IS AS FOLLOWS: BILL 101 IS NOW IN SECOND READING, WITH OPPOSITION USING EFFECTIVE DELAYING TACTICS (LONG THE FORTE OF THE PQ WHEN IT WAS IN OPPOSITION) TO PROLONG DEBATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. ASSEMBLY NOW DEBATING A LIBERAL MOTION PUTTING OFF FURTHER DEBATE ON THE BILL FOR THREE MONTHS. MOTION WILL OF COURSE FAIL, BUT IT BRINGS US ALMOST INTO AUGUST. CLAUSE-BY-CLAUSE DEBATE ON THE BILL, WITH EACH MEMBER GIVEN THE RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR 20 MINUTES ON EACH CLAUSE, MAKES PASSAGE UNLIKELY BEFORE MID-SEPTEMBER AT THE EARLIES UNLESS PQ INVOKES CLOTURE. PQ MOST RELUCTANT TO TAKE THIS STEP PRIMARILY BECAUSE INVOKING CLOTURE ON A MEASURE OF SUCH FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE WOULD BE INVITING FURTHER CHARGES OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND UNDEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES. FURTHERMORE, IN ITS OPPOSITION DAYS PQ SCORED MANY POLITICAL POINTS BY FLAYING LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WHENEVER CLOTURE WAS IMPOSED. PQ WOULD NOT ENJOY HAVING THE TABLES TURNED.

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1. COMMENT: LEVESQUE'S RECENT LETTER TO PROVINCIAL PERMIERS PROPOSING BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING ACCESS BY LINGUISTIC MINORITIES TO ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN QUEBEC AND FRENCH SCHOOLS IN OTHER PROVINCES HAS GENERATED RESPONSES FROM HIS COUNTERPARTS SUFFICIENTLY POSITIVE FOR LEVESQUE TO AGREE TO ATTEND THE ST. ANDREWS, N.B. PM CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH. CONFERENCE HOST HATFIELD HAS AGREED TO ADD LANGUAGE-OF-EDUCATION ISSUE TO THE AGENDA, AND LEVESQUE SAID WEDNESDAY THAT HE WILL AMEND BILL 101'S "QUEBEC CLAUSE" IF HE GETS "THE LEAST ENCOURAGEMENT" AT THE CONFERENCE (QUEBEC 0287).

12. LEVESQUE WILL NEED TO BRING SOMETHING REASONABLY SUBSTANTIAL  
BACK FROM ST. ANDREWS TO WIN OVER HARDLINERS IN HIS CABINET  
TO A SOFTENING OF THE LANGUAGE BILL. THE BEST GUESS HERE IS  
THAT HE WILL GET IT. IF NOT, HE COULD WELL COME HOME AUGUST  
20, BLAST ANGLOPHONE PROVINCES FOR HYPOCRICY IN REFUSING TO  
DO FOR FRANCOPHONES IN THEIR PROVINCES WHAT THEY WANT QUEBEC  
TO DO FOR ANGLOPHONES HERE, IMPOSE CLOTURE IMMEDIATELY, AND RAM  
BILL 101 THROUGH ON A WAVE OF NATIONALISTIC ENTHUSIASM.  
MCNAMARA

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## Message Attributes

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